

The History of PPAG: The First 30 Years

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This article describes the history of the Pediatric Pharmacy Advocacy Group (PPAG). From its humble beginning in 1979, to its formation as the Pediatric Directors of Pediatric Hospitals in 1985, through its time as the Pediatric Pharmacy Administrative Group and through its evolution into the PPAG. The organization was established and continues to be dedicated to improving medication therapy use in children. Its sole purpose is to promote safe and effective medication use in children through communication, education, and research. After three decades, PPAG has established itself as the preeminent pediatric pharmacy organization. Its annual conference has grown over the years to become the best educational and networking meeting for pediatric pharmacists worldwide.

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Last year, the Pediatric Pharmacy Advocacy Group (PPAG) marked its 30 year anniversary. Like nearly all worthy causes, the idea for the PPAG started with a conversation among a small group of friends and colleagues.

THE EARLY YEARS

In 1979, Douglas Smith, PharmD, Robert Poole, PharmD, and Stephen Allen, MS began discussing the need for a professional organization whose focus was to assist directors of pharmacy at children's hospitals to better meet the needs of their unique patient populations. At first these trailblazers met informally, but slowly began to formally gather at the American Society of Hospital Pharmacist's Midyear Clinical Meeting. Over the next six years, the group expanded to include directors of pharmacies from children's hospitals across the United States.

During these initial meetings a core group of leaders emerged. Dr. Douglas Smith (Chicago, IL) served as President and Chairman of the Board

from 1985–1995 (Table 1). Other charter members include: Stephen Allen, MS (Washington, DC), Joseph Sceppa, MS, MBA (Boston, Massachu-

ABBREVIATIONS PADR, Pediatric Adverse Drug Event and Reaction Reporting; PDPH, Pharmacy Directors of Pediatric Hospitals; PPAG, Pediatric Pharmacy Advocacy Group

setts), Henry "Hank" Wedemeyer, MS (Denver, Colorado), Gary Greiner, PharmD (Columbus, Ohio), David Grinder, MS (St. Petersburg, Florida), Christopher Lomax, PharmD (Los Angeles, California), Robert Warren, PharmD (Fresno, California), Darlene Anderson, BScPharm (Dallas Texas), and Robert Poole, PharmD (Stanford, California). As the network of pharmacy directors grew, the need for a more structured organization became apparent.

By 1985, their vision had taken form and the *Pharmacy Directors of Pediatric Hospitals* (PDPH) organization was born. PDPH held its first Annual Meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana during the ASHP Midyear Meeting. The direction of the organization was further shaped during Annual Board of Directors retreats in the Colorado Mountains (Figure 1). In 1987, interest in the group expanded to include associate and clinical directors and managers in pediatric pharmacy.

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Table 1. Presidents or Chairs of the PPAG Board

1985-1995	Douglas Smith, PharmD
1995-1998	David Grinder, MS
1998-1999	Stephen Allen, MS
1999-2000	Merrell Magelli, PharmD
2000-2001	Christy Scott, PharmD
2001-2002	Anne Lesko, PharmD
2002-2003	Sherry Luedtke, PharmD
2003-2004	David Gregory, PharmD
2004-2005	Robert Kuhn, PharmD
2006-2007	James Dice, PharmD
2007-2008	Cindy Dusik, PharmD
2008-2009	Jeffrey Low, PharmD
2009-2010	Michael Christensen, PharmD
2010-2011	David Knoppert, MscPharm

This expansion in membership prompted the group to change its name to the *Pediatric Pharmacy Administrative Group*.

THE 1990'S: MOMENTUM AND RAPID GROWTH

By the early 1990's, the organization continued to grow and membership expanded to include clinical pharmacists, clinical specialists, and academicians whose practice and educational efforts were centered in pediatrics. Struggling to find a voice among the larger pharmacy community, the organization changed its name to the Pediatric Pharmacy Advocacy Group (PPAG) was officially incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1992.

In 1991 the organization received a \$200,000 grant from the Kapoor Charitable Foundation



Figure 1. The very early days of PPAG board of director meeting.

Upper left photo (from left to right): David Grinder, Gary Greiner, Stephen Allen, Kellie McQueen, Julie Till

Upper right photo (from left to right): Douglas Smith, Stephen Allen, Henry Wedemeyer, Kellie McQueen

Lower left photo (from left to right): Merrell Magelli, Gary Greiner, Joseph Sceppa, Hank Wedemeyer, Kellie McQueen, Stephen Allen, Robert Poole

Bottom right (from left to right): Jeff Primovic, Julie Till, Stephen Allen, Douglas Smith, Kellie McQueen



Figure 2. PPAG changed its name from the Pediatric Pharmacy Administrative Group to the Pediatric Pharmacy Advocacy Group (PPAG).

to establish The Kapoor Center for Pediatric Drug Information at the Children's Hospital in Denver. The Kapoor Center developed the Pediatric Adverse Drug Event and Reaction Reporting (PADR) Program, which was one of the first national adverse drug reaction/effect reporting programs in the United States. In 1995, PPAG received a \$300,000 grant for this initiative from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation's Center for the Future of Children. The PADR Program expanded to 25 reporting and participating hospitals by 1998. The findings from the PADR program were published in the *Journal of Pediatric Pharmacy Practice* in 1999¹ and presented at the European Association of Hospital Pharmacists meeting in Madrid, Spain in 2000.

In 1992, Kellie McQueen, PharmD became the first Executive Director of the organization. Dr. McQueen was a pediatric pharmacist who specialized in drug information and practiced at Denver Children's Hospital. In that same year, the organization held its first meeting at Copper Mountain, Colorado and the Board of Directors changed the organization's name to the *Pediatric Pharmacy Advocacy Group* (PPAG) to reflect the diverse membership of the organization (Figure 2). The PPAG Annual Conference has grown over the years to become the best educational and networking meeting for pediatric pharmacists worldwide (Table 2).

In 1995, the Board of Directors established the Mission, Vision, and Values of PPAG: The organization is dedicated to improving medication therapy in children. Its sole purpose is to promote safe and effective medication use in children through communication, education, and research. These statements of purpose have not changed and continue as the guiding principles of the organization today.

Table 2. Meetings and Conference History

Pharmacy Directors of Pediatric Hospitals (PDPH)*	
1985	New Orleans, LA
1986	Las Vegas, NV
1987	Atlanta, GA
1988	Nashville, TN
1989	Atlanta, GA
1990	Las Vegas, NV
1991	New Orleans, LA
Pediatric Pharmacy Administrative Group (PPAG)	
1992	1 st Annual Meeting, Copper Mountain, CO
1993	2 nd Annual Meeting, Vail, CO
Pediatric Pharmacy Advocacy Group (PPAG)	
1994	3 rd Annual Meeting, NAPA, CA
1995	4 th Annual Meeting, Newport, RI
1996	5 th Annual Meeting, Scottsdale, AZ
1997	6 th Annual Meeting, Beaver Creek, CO
1998	7 th Annual Meeting, Kiawah Island, SC
1999	8 th Annual Meeting, Vancouver, British Columbia
2000	9 th Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX
2001	10 th Annual Meeting, St. Louis, MO
2002	11 th Annual Meeting, St. Petersburg, FL
	Neonatal Specialty Conference, Dallas, TX
2003	12 th Annual Meeting, Dana Point, CA
	Neonatal Specialty Conference, Tucson, AZ
2004	13 th Annual Meeting, St. Petersburg, FL
2005	14 th Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL
	Oncology Specialty Conference, Memphis, TN
2006	15 th Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA
	Neonatal Specialty Conference, Baltimore, MD
2007	16 th Annual Meeting, Portsmouth, VA
	Technology/Safety Specialty Conference, Austin, TX
2008	17 th Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD
	Neonatal Specialty Conference, Little Rock, AR
2009	18 th Annual Meeting, Cleveland, OH
	International Conference, Orlando, FL
2010	19 th Annual Meeting, St. Charles, MO
	Chronic Diseases Specialty Conference, Salt Lake City, UT

* held in conjunction with the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting

a)



b)

**Figure 3.** Official journal of PPAG

a) Journal of Pediatric Pharmacy Practice (JPPP) 1996 to 2000

b) Journal of Pediatric Pharmacology and Therapeutics (JPPT) launched in 2001

PPAG MISSION: "We are dedicated to improving medication therapy in children. Our sole purpose is to promote safe and effective medication use in children through communication, education, and research."

The Journal of Pediatric Pharmacy Practice (JPPP) became the official biomedical journal of PPAG in 1996, with David Grinder, MS serving as the founding editor (Figure 3). Mr. Grinder was director of pharmacy at All Children's Hospital, St. Petersburg, Florida. Although he had a full-time job, his recognition of the need for a journal that gave the pediatric pharmacy community an avenue for publication and continuing education, caused him to work tirelessly in his capacity as Editor.

On October 27, 1997, Mr. Grinder represented PPAG at public hearings before the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). He spoke about the need for regulation that required manufacturers to assess the safety and effectiveness of new drugs and biological products in pediatric patients. Also in 1997, PPAG partnered with Publications International to publish *Guidelines for Children's Prescription Drugs* (Figure 4). This publication provided accurate information for families about the proper use and administration of medications in children. Later that year, PPAG led the movement to avoid the use of drug name abbreviations. This effort occurred eight

years before the Joint Commission addressed the problem.

Dr. Kellie McQueen resigned as Executive Director in 1997, and the day-to-day management of the organization was outsourced to an association management company. Within one year, PPAG severed ties with the group and named Henry "Hank" Wedemeyer, MS as Executive Director (Figure 5). At the time of his appointment Mr. Wedemeyer was director of pharmacy at The Children's Hospital in Denver. During his tenure, he established and organized five very successful annual meetings, including an international gathering held in Vancouver, BC Canada (Table 2). The organization also launched its first website and electronic bulletin board (PediNet) that was dedicated to improving communication among the pediatric pharmacy community. Heading into its third decade, PPAG had 350 active members.

THE 21ST CENTURY

In 2001, *The Journal of Pediatric Pharmacy Practice* officially changed its name to *The Journal of Pediatric Pharmacology and Therapeutics* and selected Stephanie J. Phelps, PharmD as its Editor-in-Chief (Figure 3). At this time, Dr. Phelps was a professor of clinical pharmacy and pediatric at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis, Tennessee. Under her direction, the Journal became a peer-reviewed,

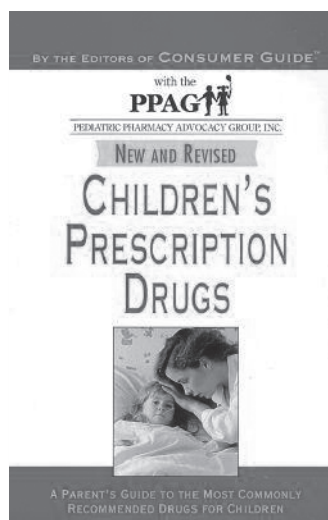


Figure 4. In 1997, PPAG published Children's Prescription Drug's with Publication International.

multi-disciplinary publication devoted to promoting the safe and effective use of medications in neonates, infants and children. Each quarterly issue included review articles, original clinical investigations, case reports, and other information relevant to pediatric practice. The name of the Journal was trademarked and PPAG began to copyright each issue.

Soon after its launch, the Journal published a groundbreaking article, "Guidelines for Preventing Medication Errors in Pediatrics."² These guidelines were co-developed with the Institute for Safe Medication Practices and were subse-



Figure 5. Hank Wedemeyer, MS Executive Director of PPAG from 1998 to 2003.

quently endorsed by both *the Society of Pediatric Nurses and ASHP*. In 2002, PPAG held its first Specialty Meeting for Neonatal Pharmacology in Dallas, Texas.

The Sumner J. Yaffe Lifetime Achievement Award in Pediatric Pharmacology and Therapeutics was established by PPAG in 2001, with the first recipient being Dr. Yaffe himself (Table 3). The award named in honor of Dr. Yaffe, who is recognized by most as the father of pediatric clinical pharmacology, is given annually to an

Table 3. Yaffe Lifetime Achievement Award in Pediatric Pharmacology and Therapeutics

Year	Recipient	Presentation
2002	Sumner Yaffe, MD	Pediatric pharmacology: its time has come ³
2003	Miles Weinberger, MD	Managing asthma: past, present, and future ⁴
2004	William Evans, PharmD	A journey from pediatric pharmacokinetics to pharmacogenomics ⁵
2005	George McCracken, MD	A historical perspective on pharmacological studies of gentamicin for therapy of neonatal meningitis ⁶
2006	Cheston Berlin, MD	Ideas, collaboration, and replication ⁷
2007	Leslie Hendeles, PharmD	Advocating for patients through clinical research ⁸
2008	Gregory Kearns, PharmD	The pursuit of pediatric clinical pharmacology: perspectives from a current journey ⁹
2009	Stephen Spielberg, MD	The dawn of pediatric personalized therapeutics ¹⁰
2010	Michael D. Reed, PharmD	TBD

TBD, to be determined

Table 4. Lifetime Honorary Members

Stephen Allen, MS
Darlene Anderson, BScPharm
Gary Greiner, PharmD
David Grinder, MS
Joseph Sceppa, MS, MBA
Douglas Smith, PharmD
Robert Poole, PharmD
Hank Wedemeyer, MS

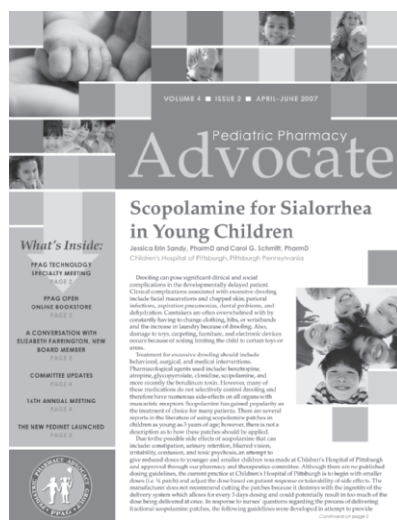
individual in recognition of their significant and sustained contributions toward the improvement of children's health through the expansion of the field of pediatric pharmacology and therapeutics. The Yaffe Lecture is published in JPPT.³⁻¹⁰

In conjunction with its 12th Annual Meeting, the PPAG board established and recognized its Honorary Members category and installed its first inductees (Table 4). Mr. Wedemeyer retired as Executive Director of PPAG in 2002 and Matthew R. Helms, MA, CAE became the third Executive Director of PPAG in 2003 (Figure 6). With his appointment, the organization's headquarters moved from Denver, Colorado to its present location in Memphis, Tennessee.

PPAG offered its first online continuing pharmacy education program in 2006. The following year, the organization launched a new website (www.ppag.org) and began to offer a quarterly newsletter for its membership. The official newsletter of PPAG became the *Pediatric Pharmacy Advocate* in 2007 (Figure 7).

The Bruce Parks Memorial Residency Project Showcase was established in 2006. Mr. Parks had been a dedicated member of PPAG who was known for his ability to inspire students to pursue a career in pediatric pharmacy. This showcase seeks to stimulate interest in the field of pediatric pharmacy by offering a highly competitive award for the best pediatric pharmacy resident platform presentation given during the spring meeting each year.

In 2006, the Richard A. Helms Excellence in Pediatric Pharmacy Practice Award was established (Table 5). Dr. Helms has distinguished himself as a nationally recognized pharmacy practitioner and researcher with a speciality interest in pediatric nutrition. The Helms Award recognizes 1) sustained and meritorious contributions to PPAG and to pediatric pharmacy practice, and 2) contributions of importance to education, new

**Figure 6.** Matthew R. Helms, MA, CAE Executive Director of PPAG from 2003 to present.**Figure 7.** PPAG launches Pediatric Pharmacy Advocate in 2007.

knowledge, and outreach. Beginning in 2008, the Helms' Lecture has been published annually in JPPT.^{11,12}

In February of 2007, the PPAG Board of Directors officially endorsed the "Shanghai Declaration," which outlines the organization's commitment to improving safe and reliable medicines for children worldwide." This endorsement also established PPAG as a member of the International Alliance for Better Medicine. In that same year PPAG launched the JPPT website (www.jppt.org).

Table 5. Helms Award for Excellence in Pediatric Pharmacy Practice

Year	Recipient	Presentation
2006	Richard Helms, PharmD	Friends and Good Food
2007	Robert Poole, PharmD	The History of PPAG
2008	Peter Gal, PharmD	Optimum use of therapeutic drug monitoring and pharmacokinetics-pharmacodynamics in the NICU ¹¹
2009	Milap Nahata, PharmD	Interplay between pediatric pharmacy practice and research to influence patient care ¹²
2010	Robert J. Kuhn, PharmD	TBD
2011	Stephanie J. Phelps, PharmD	TBD

TBD, to be determined

jppt.org).

In 2008, PPAG established an honorary Fellow category in the Pediatric Pharmacy Advocacy Group (FPPAG) program and named it first Fellows (Figure 8). The program serves to recognize excellence in pediatric pharmacy practice and to promote public awareness of pharmacists who have distinguished themselves in pediatric pharmacy.

The Local Communities and Networks (LCN) Recognition Program was also established. Through networking events, local programming, regional news and volunteer opportunities, the Local Networks build a community of peers, advance career and volunteer opportunities within the pediatric pharmacy community.

In April of 2008, the Board formally approved the establishment of the first permanent reserve fund. PPAG also launched an online comprehensive Age-based Competency for Pediatrics Program. Furthermore, KidsMeds, a website dedicated to accurate pediatric drug information for parents, families, and caretakers, was also launched (www.kidsmed.info). With the arrival of social networking, PPAG launched sites on both Facebook and Twitter.

In 2009, PPAG maintained its commitment to improving safe and reliable medicines for children worldwide by planning the 1st International Pediatric Pharmacy and Pharmacology Summit in association with the American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP). This important event brought international pediatric pharmacy and clinical pharmacology organizations who were involved in the use of medicines in children came together to share research, practice, and ideas to improve pediatric practices. JPPT was approved for inclusion into PubCentral and Sherry Luedtke, PharmD was named as the Associate Editor of JPPT.



Figure 8. PPAG inducted its first fellows (FPPAG) during its 2009 18th annual meeting.

Marcia Buck, PharmD (upper left); James Dice, PharmD (upper right); Helen Fiechtner, PharmD (lower left); Kay C. Kyllonen, PharmD (lower right)

The history of PPAG is replete with many noteworthy moments (Table 6). Today, the organization has grown to over 750 members who reside in all 50 states and in 20 foreign countries. From that first conversation among friends, PPAG has grown in size and scope to become the primary resource for pediatric medication therapy in children. PPAG continues to develop educational programs for practitioners and families that will continue to influence the safe and effective use of medications in children for years to come.

Table 6. Significant Milestones in PPAG History

Date	Event
1979	Informal group meets to discuss the need for a pediatric pharmacy organization
1985	Pharmacy Directors of Pediatric Hospitals (PDPH) formed 1 st meeting in New Orleans, LA
1987	In order to reflect growing membership demographics the name was changed to Pediatric Pharmacy Administrative Group
1991	Pediatric Pharmacy Administrative Group received a \$200,000 grant from the Kapoor Charitable Foundation Kellie McQueen, PharmD becomes the first Executive Director of PPAG
1992	In order to reflect growing membership demographics the name was changed Pediatric Pharmacy Advocacy Group 1st Annual Meeting at Copper Mountain, Colorado PPAG was officially incorporated as a non-profit organization
1995	Created the organizational mission: We are dedicated to improving medication therapy in children. Our sole purpose is to promote safe and effective medication use in children through communication, education, and research. PPAG received a \$300,000 grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation's for its' Pediatric Adverse Drug Event and Reaction Reporting Program (PADR)
1996	<i>The Journal of Pediatric Pharmacy Practice</i> (JPPP) became the official journal of PPAG with Dave Grinder, PharmD serving as the founding editor
1997	Kellie McQueen resigns as Executive Director and day-to-day management was outsourced to an Association Management Company PPAG partnered with Publications International to publish <i>Guidelines for Children's Prescription Drugs</i> .
1998	Henry "Hank" Wedemeyer named Executive Director and PPAG office established in Denver, Colorado
2001	<i>The Journal of Pediatric Pharmacy Practice</i> became <i>The Journal of Pediatric Pharmacology and Therapeutics</i> and Stephanie J. Phelps, PharmD became Editor-in-Chief. "Guidelines for Preventing Medication Errors in Pediatrics" were co-developed with the Institute for Safe Medication Practices and published in JPPT Henry "Hank" Wedemeyer resigns as Executive Director
2002	PPAG holds first Neonatal Specialty Conference in Dallas, Texas PPAG launched an organizational website and PediNet
2003	Matthew R. Helms named Executive Director and PPAG office moved to Memphis, Tennessee Sumner J. Yaffe Lifetime Achievement Award in Pediatric Pharmacology and Therapeutics was established PPAG established and recognized Lifetime Honorary Members: Steve Allen, Darlene Anderson, Gary Greiner, Dave Grinder, Joe Sceppa, Doug Smith, Bob Poole, and Hank Wedemeyer
2004	PPAG launched a new website (www.ppag.org) and the quarterly newsletter became the <i>Pediatric Pharmacy Advocate</i>
2006	Bruce Parks Memorial Residency Project Showcase established Richard A. Helms Excellence in Pediatric Pharmacy Practice Award
2007	PPAG officially endorsed the "Shanghai Declaration," which outlines the organization's commitment to improving safe and reliable medicines for children worldwide." PPAG becomes a member of the International Alliance for Better Medicine. PPAG launched the JPPT website (www.jppt.org).
2008	PPAG established the Fellowship in the Pediatric Pharmacy Advocacy Group (FPPAG) and inducts the first fellows in 2009
2009	PPAG holds First International Pediatric Pharmacy and Pharmacology Summit in association meeting with the American College of Clinical Pharmacy in Orlando, Florida JPPT was approved for inclusion in PubCentral and names an Associate Editor, Sherry Luedtke, PharmD.

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